

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 1-15 as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A nozzle for plasma torches, said nozzle comprising
a body integrally formed of a metal or a metal alloy ~~with~~ and
wear-resistant microparticles of a hard material ~~embedded in~~, said microparticles
being uniformly distributed within the total volume of the metal or the metal alloy,
at least in ~~certain regions~~ an arc forming region of the body.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): The nozzle as claimed in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~
the wherein a maximum grain size of said embedded microparticles is less than or
equal to 30 μm .

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): The nozzle as claimed in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~
the wherein a maximum grain size of said embedded microparticles is less than or
equal to 15 μm .

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): The nozzle as claimed in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~
wherein said hard material is a carbide.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): The nozzle as claimed in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~
wherein said hard material is silicon carbide.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): The nozzle as claimed in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~
wherein said hard material for the microparticles is an oxide, a carbide, a nitride or
a boride or, alternatively, microparticles of at least two of such materials.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): The nozzle as claimed in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~
wherein said microparticles are in a grain size spectrum around an average grain size
 d_{50} , which is located in the range between 1 and 5 μm .

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): The nozzle as claimed in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~
wherein said embedded microparticles fill a volume proportion in the range between
0.5 and 15% in the ~~nozzle material~~ body.

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): The nozzle as claimed in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~
wherein said microparticles are embedded in ~~the~~ a region pointing toward ~~the~~ an
inside of the ~~nozzle~~ body.

Claim 10 (Currently Amended): The nozzle as claimed in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said microparticles are embedded in ~~the~~ a region of ~~the nozzle an~~ opening of the body.

Claim 11 (Currently Amended): The nozzle as claimed in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said microparticles are embedded in a locally differentiated manner.

Claim 12 (Currently Amended): The nozzle as claimed in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said metal or metal alloy nozzle is essentially formed from copper or a copper alloy.

Claim 13 (Currently Amended): A method for manufacturing a nozzle for plasma cutting torches as claimed in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the nozzle is manufactured by extrusion from a metal or metal alloy powder mixture containing said microparticles.

Claim 14 (Currently Amended): The method as claimed in claim 13, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein a final contour of the nozzle is formed by at least one of a chip-removal machining process ~~and/or~~ and a metal-forming process.

Claim 15 (Currently Amended): The nozzle as claimed in claim 1, ~~characterized in~~
~~that~~ wherein said hard material is a ceramic material.